10: Linton E-5 (1920-1921)1939
OX6 Marquesas OX6

younger children active enough to keep up with the gang. The group usually remained together until the members began to marry and settle down. There was a tendency for these gangs to gather about the eldest child of a chief or of one of the more important families. This leader, who might be either a girl or a boy, dominated the group. From the age of ten on, children were largely independent of their households and families. The older gangs were familiar with the taboos and dangers and could look after themselves. They spent most of their time fishing and raiding plantations for food when they were hungry. There was no wanton mischief or deliberate vandalism; they simply amused themselves. A child might be away from home for two or three days on one of these gang expeditions. The children did whatever they wanted to do. When hungry they went to the nearest house and were fed; at night, since every house had a bed at least thirty feet long, they were accommodated wherever they chanced to be when night fell.

Leadership in the gang was based on ability, so that often a particularly strong and active girl would be the leader. There was not much fighting among the children, but when a fight did break out, the girls were quite capable of taking care of themselves. Marquesan children had extraordinary self-confidence and composure. On one occasion I visited a valley where white men rarely penetrated. I paid a call upon a particular household to which I had an introduction through native friends of mine. I called a greeting at the door of the house and was met by a little girl of about five. Although she had probably never seen a white man before, she welcomed me with perfect composure, explained that none of the elders was at home, but invited me into the house, spread out the proper mat, sat down, and entertained me graciously until her elders arrived. This fine feeling for the social graces, which was typical of the Marquesans, was also observable in the life which the children led among themselves away from the adults. They seldom played group games of any sort, but they danced and sang in imitation of the elders and also copied the occupations

10: Linton E-5 (1920-1921)1939
OX6 Marquesas OX6

while married ones might. Thus if a woman's main husband appeared too interested in another woman she would first threaten suicide, and then, in many cases, carry out her threat. Her death would not bring the vengeance of her family on the husband, but it would grieve him, bring public censure, and also break up the household. The secondary husbands would leave and he would have to attach himself to another household in a subsidiary position. How far these practices are to be interpreted as expressions of jealousy is a question. The main factor seems to have been wounded pride.

After marriage there was little if any overt expression of jealousy on the part of the men. It must be remembered that the household was normally made up of a girl and a group of boys from her gang who were particularly attached to her and to each other. Jealousy between plural husbands or even between married men over some woman outside their households was considered very bad manners. Such men never quarreled over women when sober, but when drunk there were numerous fights, some quite serious, when knives were used. The participants were much humiliated when they became sober, and there would be an exchange of apologies the next day. In a well established household there was no quarreling over the wife.

There were various forms of marriages, the most formal being that between the eldest son of the chief of one tribe and the eldest daughter of the chief of another tribe, a union which would unite two lines and promote peace between the two groups. The betrothal in these cases was made in infancy, and during the period of the engagement feasts given by one family or the other. The marriage was an elaborate ceremony with extensive gift exchanges. The group who went to the neighboring village to get the bride carried live pigs lashed to a tremendous timber frame. This delegation would be attacked by the men of the receiving group, who would attempt to drive them off and carry away the pigs. Later there would be a return ceremony with another offering of pigs.

Only a household well up in the social scale could afford a